

28806
EB

SERVICE DATE - JANUARY 14, 1998

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB SERVICE ORDER NO. 1518

JOINT PETITION FOR SERVICE ORDER

STB EX PARTE NO. 573

RAIL SERVICE IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES

Decided: January 13, 1998

In these proceedings, we have addressed the transportation emergency in the western part of the United States. We have responded to the emergency in a variety of ways, including the issuance of a service order, which, unless extended, will expire on March 15, 1998. One of our responses required that the Union Pacific Railroad Company and the Southern Pacific Transportation Corporation (UP/SP) and, to a lesser extent, Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) file weekly reports setting out information in a variety of operational categories.

Those reports are intended to give the Board an overall picture of the extent of the service recovery. Additionally, the more specific reports that we have required for coal and agricultural movements have given us substantial insight into the levels of service being provided for those commodities. However, since our December 3, 1997, hearing in the Service Order No. 1518 proceeding, in connection with which we did receive some survey information from certain shipper witnesses, we have not had input directly from shipper groups representing a broad spectrum of commodities as to the level of service that their members are currently receiving. Accordingly, we are asking shipper groups to provide that type of data to the Board and parties to these proceedings.

Our objective is to obtain benchmark information, from the shipper perspective to supplement the data being submitted by UP/SP and BNSF, that is as current as possible, so that we can determine, sufficiently in advance of the March 15th expiration date, what further Board action may be appropriate. Therefore, we request reports by February 13, 1998, covering the 4-month period ending February 6, 1998. The reports should contain information on how the railroad's performance during the above period compares with its performance during the comparable period for the prior year. Specifically, the information should address requests for service and the extent to which those service requests were met (e.g., the timeliness with which cars were placed for loading

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and the timeliness with which transportation was completed). To ensure that the data is useful, parties are encouraged to aggregate their data to the maximum extent possible. We are particularly interested in performance information concerning UP/SP, but comments may also be submitted for BNSF, particularly insofar as it relates to the movements for which BNSF must file weekly reports.

It is ordered:

1. Shipper groups may file service-level reports by February 13, 1998, covering the 4-month period ending February 6, 1998, including information for the comparable period during the prior year.
2. This decision is effective immediately.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan and Vice Chairman Owen.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

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